

HB1304OffShoreBlindSites.pdf

Uploaded by: Johnny Mautz

Position: FAV

March 9, 2022

SPONSOR TESTIMONY
DELEGATE JOHNNY MAUTZ
DIST. 37B – CAROLINE, DORCHESTER, TALBOT & WICOMICO COUNTIES

HB 1304—NATURAL RESOURCES—OFFSHORE BLIND SITES—LICENSING PROCESS

Summary

HB1304 would require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to conduct the offshore blind site licensing in person, which is how licensing was administered prior to COVID.

Background

Following the onset of COVID restrictions and shutdowns, the DNR temporarily transitioned to an online administration of the offshore blind site licensing process. Prior to COVID this annual process was working without problem.

The offshore blind site program was delicately balanced among various stakeholders. It is not a universal program throughout all counties.

Changes to the program during COVID were not coordinated or open to public input.

Rationale

HB1304 simply restores this program to its pre-COVID processes.

Conclusion

We respectfully request a **favorable report of HB1304** from the Committee and thank you for considering this important legislation.

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AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
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SERVICES

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BY: Delegate Mautz

(To be offered in the Environment and Transportation Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 1304

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, strike beginning with “requiring” in line 5 down through “county;” in line 6.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 2, in line 17, strike the brackets; strike beginning with “**SUBJECT**” in line 17 down through “**LICENSING**” in line 18; and strike in their entirety lines 20 and 21.

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Uploaded by: Bunky Luffman

Position: INFO



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

Bill Number: House Bill 1304

Short Title: Natural Resources-Offshore Blind Sites-Licensing Process

Department's Position: Letter of Information

Explanation of Department's Position

This bill proposes amendments to Natural Resource Article 10-608, which would require that the offshore blind site licensing process be held on an in-person, first-come first-served basis. In order to facilitate the requirements of the bill, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would need to hold a one-day licensing event in each participating county on a different day.

Instituting this process would create numerous operational difficulties and also raises concerns regarding fairness. For example a first-come, first-served model may benefit only hunters that live close to the licensing locations and/or have the ability to take time off of work to attend on a certain day. Maryland hunters expect a fair and orderly process for establishing each participant's place in line. Additionally, counties that host a licensing day first will be able to monopolize the selection of offshore blind sites on rivers that may transcend multiple counties. This is especially true given the distance rules associated with blind site licensing (e.g., all blind sites must be at least 250 yards apart).

DNR currently offers an adequate virtual option with greater accessibility and convenience for use by all Maryland hunters.

For any additional information, please feel free to contact our Legislative and Constituent Services Director, Bunky Luffman.

Contact: Bunky Luffman, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
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